

Minneapolis Community Development Agency

Request for City Council Action

Date: September 30, 2002

To: Council Member Lisa Goodman, Community Development Committee
Council Member Scott Benson, Intergovernmental Relations Committee

Prepared by Ann Calvert, Senior Project Coordinator, Phone 612-673-5023

Approved by Chuck Lutz, MCDA Interim Executive Director _____

Subject: Approval of Minneapolis' Grand Excursion 2004 Legacy Project

Previous Directives: On February 18, 2000, the City Council approved a resolution supporting Grand Excursion 2004 and requesting the Greater Minneapolis Convention and Visitors Association to play the lead role for Minneapolis in planning.

Ward: 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 12

Neighborhood Group Notification: Minneapolis neighborhood organizations have been informed of Grand Excursion 2004 and the proposed "Legacy Project" via the Minneapolis River Forum mailings and meetings.

Consistency with *Building a City That Works*: Goal 4.B – Preserve and enhance the historic structures, urban institutions, environments and amenities that define Minneapolis by redeveloping the upper and central Mississippi riverfront.

Comprehensive Plan Compliance: Not applicable.

Zoning Code Compliance: Not applicable.

Impact on MCDA Budget: (Check those that apply)

- ☒ No financial impact
- ☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the MCDA Budget
- ☐ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
- ☐ Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- ☐ Other financial impact (Explain):

Living Wage / Business Subsidy: Not applicable.

Job Linkage: Not applicable.

Affirmative Action Compliance: Not applicable

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RECOMMENDATION: The Interim Executive Director recommends that the City Council approve the proposed official Minneapolis Grand Excursion Legacy Project described herein.

Background/Supporting Documentation

Grand Excursion 2004 is a regional initiative (Twin Cities to Quad Cities) designed to recognize and celebrate the incredible renaissance that has occurred throughout the upper reaches of America's River – the Mississippi. Over forty-two communities and fourteen regional organizations have endorsed the Grand Excursion and are working collaboratively towards its success. Grand Excursion 2004 will mark the 150th anniversary of the Grand Excursion of 1854, a significant event in the early settlement of the upper Mississippi. The attached fact sheet includes further information about Grand Excursion, its three main components and how the regional and local involvement is being organized.

The "Commemorate" component of Grand Excursion encourages participating communities to identify an official "Legacy Project" that the community is leaving as a legacy for future generations. While these Legacy Projects will not receive any funding as a result of designation, the regional Grand Excursion organization will be working to publicize these projects to the world.

The regional organization also plans to provide each local community with a "Discovery Marker" that will commemorate the community's role in the 1854 and 2004 Grand Excursions and its Legacy Project. Each local community will be expected to provide the marker site, install the marker and commit to long-term maintenance.

A Minneapolis Commemorate Committee has been created, and that committee has prepared (with public input from the Minneapolis River Forum) the attached recommendation for approval as Minneapolis' official Grand Excursion Legacy Project. Given the large number of compelling ways in which Minneapolis is working to reconnect to the Mississippi River, the Legacy Project is proposed as an over-arching goal being achieved in four different ways and with four major physical projects selected to highlight those overall goals. As the Discovery Marker design is not yet known, a specific marker location and implementation plan have not yet been identified.

In addition to seeking approval of the Legacy Project from the Minneapolis City Council, the recommended Legacy Project will be presented for approval to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board.

Grand Excursion, Inc. is requiring a \$20 application fee for the Legacy Project/Discovery Marker program. It is proposed that the MCDA and MPRB split this fee. This expenditure can be covered with existing budget appropriation.

The following summarizes the recommended Minneapolis Legacy Project (which must be submitted to Grand Excursion, Inc. in no more than 120 words).

GRAND EXCURSION 2004

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED MINNEAPOLIS LEGACY PROJECT

MISSISSIPPI/MINNEAPOLIS RECONNECTED

Re-connecting the city of Minneapolis to a healthy and vital Mississippi River in four ways:

Environment – Residents will respect the Mississippi River as an environmental treasure through improved water quality and shoreline and habitat restoration (illustrative highlight – North Mississippi Regional Park and Interpretive Center).

Community-building – The Mississippi Riverfront will provide vital places for people to live, work and refresh their spirits (illustrative highlight – Grain Belt area redevelopment).

History – People will understand and celebrate the important role the Mississippi River has played in Minneapolis (illustrative highlight – West Side Milling District).

Recreation – The Mississippi River will be enjoyed as a world-class amenity with access provided via continuous parkways and trails, docks and other recreational facilities (illustrative highlight – Grand Rounds Scenic Byway improvements).

GRAND EXCURSION 2004

GENERAL FACT SHEET

What is Grand Excursion 2004?

It is a regional initiative (Twin Cities to Quad Cities) designed to recognize and celebrate the incredible renaissance that has occurred throughout the upper reaches of America's River – the Mississippi. Over forty-two communities and fourteen regional organizations have endorsed the Grand Excursion and are working collaboratively towards its success. The initiative has three main components:

CELEBRATE... the 150th anniversary of the Grand Excursion with a series of events including the capstone event – the Grand Flotilla – and through these celebrations bring recognition and awareness to the world.

EDUCATE... about the Grand Excursion and the Mississippi River and our relationship with this significant natural resource through a documentary video, a web site and exploration trunks for school programs.

COMMEMORATE... the historic occasion of the original Grand Excursion by establishing permanent legacy projects in participating communities and by serving as a catalyst for lasting regional initiatives and improvements along the upper Mississippi River.

Additional information may be found at www.grandexcursion.com.

When will the Grand Excursion take place?

2004 will be a yearlong celebration of the Upper Mississippi. The Grand Excursion educational programs should be available in time for the 2003-04 school year, and the commemorative Discovery Markers are targeted for placement in early 2004. The capstone event, the Grand Flotilla, will begin in the Quad Cities in late June of 2004 and will culminate in the Twin Cities on the Fourth of July weekend.

What was the Grand Excursion 1854?

Historically speaking, the Grand Excursion of 1854 represented a major turning point of the settlement and expansion of the area along the upper Mississippi River. It started out simply as a celebration of America's first railroad link to the Mississippi River - Chicago to Rock Island. Over 1,200 dignitaries, politicians, journalists and businessmen, including former President Millard Fillmore, boarded a rail car in Chicago for Rock Island, Illinois. This group transferred to a fleet of seven steamboats for a trip up the Mississippi River to Saint Paul, Minnesota, furthered then by horseback and wagon to view the beautiful and magnificent Falls of Saint Anthony, in what is now known as Minneapolis. As the media wrote home, word spread about what a splendid place this part of America was. The year following the Grand Excursion, the upper Mississippi saw twice the amount of traffic as the previous year and by 1858 Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin all had become states.

How is Grand Excursion 2004 being organized?

Grand Excursion, Inc. is the not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization coordinating the efforts of the region-wide initiative. Based in Saint Paul, the organization is made up of board members who are advised by staff and advisory committees for each of the three program areas – Educate, Commemorate and Celebrate. Its focus is to initiate and complete the plan of work outlined in the organization's business plan. It will serve as a catalyst to generate new programs, forge and renew enduring partnerships, accelerate key projects and cultivate awareness of this beautiful region.

The Greater Minneapolis Convention and Visitors Association (GMCVA) has been identified by the Minneapolis City Council as the lead agency for Grand Excursion in Minneapolis. Michael Rainville of the GMCVA represents Minneapolis on the Grand Excursion, Inc. board. Local Minneapolis committees have begun work in the three program areas of Educate, Celebrate and Commemorate.

Many organizations in Minneapolis and St. Paul have committed to complete projects related to Grand Excursion. More information on these projects can be found under "Grand Excursion 2004" at www.riverfrontcorporation.com.

What work are the Grand Excursion 2004 Minneapolis committees doing?

The Celebrate Committee is planning a "Mingling of the Waters" event that will supplement the annual Fourth of July riverfront activities and parade that will greet the visitors when they arrive on July 4, 2004. This committee will also explore ways to include the Grand Excursion concept in other events and activities.

The Educate Committee will be working with the regional committee on the documentary video, informational web site and K-12 "River Exploration Trunks" and will be exploring other educational opportunities.

The Commemorate Committee is working to recommend Minneapolis' official Legacy Project and the location of Minneapolis' Discovery Marker. The following information provides further information about the Commemorate component of Grand Excursion and how Minneapolis can participate.

What does the Grand Excursion 2004 Commemorate component include?

The "Commemorate" component of the Grand Excursion 2004 initiative encourages each community along the Mississippi River from Minneapolis to the Quad Cities to use the Grand Excursion to tell its story and to leave a permanent legacy with long-term value for improving the community and/or the Mississippi River. This includes one or more "Legacy Projects" in each participating community, commemorated by a "Discovery Marker."

What is a “Legacy Project”?

Each participating community will be asked to identify a Legacy Project that it is bequeathing to the community for the next 150 years. Each Legacy Project should have the following characteristics:

- It has a relationship to and/or benefits the Mississippi River (e.g., natural resource protection or enhancement, historic preservation, river-related recreational improvements, river access).
- It will have long-term value (ideally, another 150 years).
- It is significant in scale and is tangible, with some level of public physical and/or visual access.
- It does not need to be a project that is occurring solely because of Grand Excursion 2004.
- If not completed by mid-2004, it should be at least tangibly under way (i.e., planning/design completed and implementation under way, with completion of at least a first phase by mid-2006).

The funding and implementation of the Legacy Projects are the responsibility of the communities.

What are “Discovery Markers”?

Grand Excursion, Inc. will provide participating communities with a Discovery Marker to commemorate its participation in the Grand Excursion. Each marker will contain:

- Descriptions of the 1854 and 2004 Grand Excursions, which will be consistent on all markers
- A description of the community and/or what was significant in its area in 1854
- A description of the community in 2004 and how it has changed since 1854
- A description of the community’s desired legacy for the future, including a description of its legacy project – what it is and where it is located

Each local community will be expected to supply the Discovery Marker site, complete any needed site improvements, pay for marker installation and commit to long-term maintenance of the Marker. The Marker site should be in a location readily accessible to local residents and visitors and, if appropriate, near the Legacy Project.

Grand Excursion, Inc. will help publicize the Legacy Projects and Discovery Markers to highlight the many exciting ways that local communities are improving their relationships with the Mississippi River and to encourage visitors to discover the upper Mississippi.

What process is being used to identify Minneapolis’ Legacy Project and Discovery Marker location?

The Minneapolis Commemorate Committee discussed a number of approaches in considering possible Legacy Projects. These included: 1) identifying a broad over-arching goal that is truly an impressive legacy for future generations, 2) identifying one or more major specific project(s) expected to be completed by mid-2004 without additional funding or effort, or 3) taking on a new project specifically for Grand Excursion.

After discussing these three approaches and specific projects in each of the three categories, the committee recommended that Minneapolis' official Legacy Project be the over-arching goal of re-connecting Minneapolis to the Mississippi River, with four major projects selected as "legacy highlight projects" that illustrate this overall goal and the four general ways it is being achieved. Given the large number of exciting River-related projects under way along the River, it was deemed difficult to pick only one project as the official Legacy Project. In addition, given limited staff and funding resources, it was deemed unwise to focus on a speculative project that might run into funding or other challenges. The four "highlight" projects are geographically diverse, significant in magnitude and include historical preservation/interpretation, environmental enhancement/education, recreational access and community-building aspects.

Public input into this recommendation was sought at the August Minneapolis River Forum meeting, at which participants supported the basic recommendation, but proposed some refinements that are reflected in the Legacy Project being recommended for official approval. In addition to seeking approval from the Minneapolis City Council, the recommended Legacy Project will be presented for approval to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board.

Where might the Minneapolis Discovery Marker be located?

The Minneapolis Commemorate Committee also discussed various possible Discovery Marker locations and tentatively identified the general area of the Mill Ruins Park/Mill City Museum/Chicago plaza. This site is centrally located in an area that is expected to attract large numbers of visitors and is at one of the four Legacy Highlight Projects. As the marker size, design and materials have not yet been identified, it is premature to specify an exact location or commit to the installation and long-term maintenance of the marker.